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ABSTRACT

The Downtown Learning Center (DLC) is designed to develop a student's initiative, self-discipline, and orientation toward the future by providing an individually planned program for each student and a structure by which each student may set goals, design learning experiences, and appraise the results of the learning effort. To date, DLC has served 445 students from 26 schools with the alternative path to worthwhile goals. The center currently serves 154 students of high school age. The staff includes 11 teachers, 1 librarian, 1 counselor, and 2 part-time supply teachers. Students attend DLC while remaining enrolled in their home school. The present group represents 25 high schools. Examination of the School System Objectives for 1973-74 and evaluating DLC in relation to those objectives leaves little doubt about its efficacy. Surely the general goal is achieved. Student records indicate improved performance. The system of contract-writing attests to learner involvement. DLC's contribution to accomplishing the objective concerning community involvement can be seen in many contacts made with the community through parents in all high schools, through community resources for learning, and through community interest generated and evidenced by inquiries directed to the center. (Author/JM)

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

VOL. VIII, NO.6 FEBRUARY, 1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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EDUCATION

DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER EVALUATION

1973-74

UD 014881

Atlanta Public Schools

Atlanta, Georgia

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

VOL. VIII, NO. 6 February 1975

DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER EVALUATION

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INTRODUCTION

The school reform movement of the sixties produced incontrovertible evidence that a need exists in the cities of this country for a form of schooling that appeals to that group of young people for whom the regular school is unpalatable. The young people in such a category include potential dropouts, actual dropouts, malcontents of various forms, juvenile offenders in the custody of courts, as well as the many categories of the gifted.

In 1970, the Atlanta school system began a school to provide an alternative form of education. Two teachers, Lamar Hamric and Hilton Smith, in response to the urgent need of many of the city's young people, began the Downtown Learning Center with this proposal, approved by the Board of Education:

> Most high school pupils perform according to the expectations of Atlanta high schools, but many are turned off (or not turned on) by the environment in which they are expected to perform. There are occasional successes by the individual teacher or by a special program in motivating pupils who otherwise 'underachieve.' These successes suggest ways to alter the environment of high schools to improve their performance in teaching these pupils. These alterations seem to be impractical, unproven, or threatening to those who would be altered. In a time when slogans, catch words, and educational panaceas are magically flashed before us (but pots of gold are not!) perhaps caution is advisable. But the cost of caution is that we lose the latent talents of young people who roll over, drop out, and sleep in response to the usual, unaltered high school environment.
>
> Therefore, it seems reasonable to propose the creation and maintenance of a new environment in which to educate high school pupils who have academic abilities but do not learn in a regular school environment. The occasional successes mentioned above suggest that such an environment has these characteristics:
>
> . . . relatively unstructured, open, accessible
> . . . delivers what it promises
> . . . involves pupils in planning and operating
> . . . success-oriented
> . . . highly individualized
>
> Such an environment warrants the term 'non-school.' This project would seek to give pupils educational experiences of the sort not presently available in schools at a low cost and low risk. This mission is to help pupils acquire intellectual and emotional handles with which to cope with school, jobs, home, and other people.

The project was housed at first in Central Junior High, moving for the second year of operation to its present location, one of the oldest school buildings in Atlanta, Walker Street School.

The Downtown Learning Center began its fourth year of operation in 1974, the year that bookstores received the published version of the report of the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education. This Commission, established by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation in 1972, was charged to: ". . . make a comprehensive examination of secondary education and provide the American public with a clear, factual picture of their secondary schools, indicating where and how they can be altered to better serve the nation's young people."

The Commission membership was selected to represent the points of view of the American Association of School Administrators, National School Boards Association, Chief State School Officers Association, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, National Catholic Educational Association, and North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Also represented were state legislatures, the teaching profession, teacher training institutions, volunteer and tutorial programs, career education, higher education, high school student bodies, and the private sector.

After monthly hearings, on-site visits, and many investigations in this country and abroad, the Commission made thirty-two recommendations, of which three are particularly related to the needs that Downtown Learning Center was designed to meet:

#12 Alternative Paths to High School Completion
A wide variety of paths leading to completion of requirements for graduation from high school should be made available to all students. Individual students must be encouraged to assume major responsibility for the determination of their educational goals, the development of the learning activities needed to achieve those goals, and the appraisal of their progress.

#14 Credit for Experience
Secondary schools should establish extensive programs to award academic credit for accomplishment outside the building and for learning that occurs on the job, whether the job be undertaken for pay, for love, or for its own sake. Community involvement will, of course, be required in such a program and should be as encompassing as possible.

#19 Flexibility of Alternative Programs
Differing time sequences -- hourly, daily, weekly, yearly, -- must be made available so that educational progress can be adapted to the needs of individual students.

Schools are already moving away from the Carnegie Unit and are beginning to grant credit on the basis of competence, demonstrated experience, and a host of other assessments. It is recommended that this practice be expanded and that the Carnegie Unit become merely one of the alternative ways of granting credit.

The Commission Report, The Reform of Secondary Education: A Report of the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, was published by the McGraw-Hill Book Company. Commission chairman was B. Frank Brown, a director in the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. The report reviews the many historical and social factors which underscore the great need for boards of education to provide Alternative Schools.

It is a significant achievement that, two years before a national commission began the study which culminated in the recommendation for alternative paths to a high school education, Atlanta had in operation a center designed to develop a student's initiative, self-discipline, and orientation toward the future by providing an individually planned program for each student and a structure by which each student may set goals, design learning experiences, and appraise the results of the learning effort. To date, the Downtown Learning Center has served 445 students from 26 schools in Atlanta with the alternative path to worthwhile goals.

ORGANIZATION

Staff and Students

Downtown Learning Center is an instructional community of 156 students of high school age. Their composition is:

	Race		
Sex	Black	White	Total
Male	44	40	84
Female	30	42	72
Total	74	82	156

The staff of the school consists of 11 teachers, one librarian, one counselor, one secretary, one administrator, one cafeteria manager, four custodial staff, two part-time supply teachers, and several volunteers. The composition of the paid staff is: 10 female and 12 male; or 14 black and 8 white.

Students attend the Downtown Learning Center while remaining enrolled in their home school. The present group represents 25 high schools. Table 1 shows the number from each high school presently enrolled, along with the number enrolled in the past three years.

TABLE 1

ENROLLMENT AT DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER
FROM ATLANTA HIGH SCHOOLS

	Former	Present	Total
Archer	6	1	7
Bass	11	7	18
Carver	9	12	21
Douglass	3	5	8
Dykes	22	0	22
E. Atlanta	18	1	19
Fulton	5	6	1
George	4	5	9
Grady	24	12	36
Harper	3	1	4
Howard	4	5	9
Murphy	5	4	9
N. Fulton	22	35	57
Northside	30	26	56
O'Keefe	6	4	10
Parks	1	1	2
Price	1	3	12
Roosevelt	13	2	15
Smith	3	2	5
Southwest	10	6	16
Sylvan	13	1	14
Therrell	23	5	28
Turner	5	3	8
Washington	18	12	8
West Fulton	11	2	13
	291	154	445

Admission of Students

The students arrive at Downtown Learning Center (DLC) via several routes. A common factor of all students is that they are

there because they want to be and because there is some evidence that the unique learning environment will be of benefit to them. The student may be referred to DLC by friends, parents, high school counselor, juvenile court officer, or because he/she heard of the place and initiated the activity toward becoming enrolled there. Any student eligible to attend a high school may apply.

The completed application of each student is studied by a Review Board composed of three teachers and four students balanced by race and sex. (See Appendix for sample of application form.) The membership of the Review Board rotates such that every DLC student may serve on the board. Recommendations on students' admission are made after a review of the application and an interview with the prospective student. Once a student is admitted, the Review Board provides orientation and counseling services as needed. Occasionally, the Board must recommend that a student consider alternatives other than Downtown Learning Center. (See Appendix for detailed description of Review Board duties.)

Staff Review Team

Another review board functions in a similar way to provide for staffing the Center. The Staff Review Team is composed of three teachers and considers the opinions of students to identify appropriate personnel, both contract and volunteer, for filling the staff needs. This group serves as a sounding board for staff needs in many of the same ways that the Review Board serves students.

Socioeconomic Status

A commonly used index of the socioeconomic status of a student body is the number of free lunches served. At DLC 18 to 24 of the 40 lunches served each day go to eligible nonpaying students. This indicates that approximately 15 per cent of the enrollment come from families of the lower economic levels. There are indications that some of the students come from very affluent homes. These facts along with the proportion of ethnic group representation suggest that the students at Downtown Learning Center represent a broad cross-section of the population of our city -- a very appropriate learning environment for young citizens.

Mobility

Summarizing the data related to 291 students formerly enrolled at DLC indicates that they may be classified as either a probable dropout or not a probable dropout. A track of the progress of these students and their termination of the high school experience gives an index of the mobility of students in and out of DLC.

Table 2 presents the summary data. Possibly the most significant item in the summary concerns the probable dropouts. Of the 232 probable dropouts, only 64 became actual dropouts and 75 returned to the home school. If all 75 who returned to the home school did eventually dropout (which is not suggested by the evidence) the DLC graduation of 25 per cent of the probable droputs is noteworthy. Thus, it can be said that Downtown Learning Center contributed to continuing the education of 445 students including those presently enrolled who might otherwise have diminished their potential for productivity as learners and citizens.

TABLE 2

MOBILITY DATA FOR 291 DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER FORMER STUDENTS

	Probable Dropout		Nonprobable Dropout		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Dropped out	64	29	0	0	64	21
Returnd to Home School	75	32	14	23	89	30
Graduated (while at DLC)	55	23	32	54	87	29
Passed GED	10	4	3	5	13	4
Other*	28	12	10	16	38	13
Total	232		59		291	

* Other may be: trade school, Atlanta Area Tech, withdrew to marry or work full time, Job Corps, hospitalization, Youth Development Center, Opportunities Instructional Center, moved from the city, Navy, or never attended after admission.

Definitions:

Probable Dropout -- A student who (1) had dropped out, (2) was in the process of dropping out, (3) expressed intent to dropout, or (4) had grades and attendance that clearly fit the usual dropout pattern.

Dropout -- Just disappeared, or refused to go to school anywhere; no formal withdrawal

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Returned to Home School --	Either (1) chose to return for personal reasons or (2) was sent back by Review Board (or mutual consent with adviser).
Graduated --	Received diploma from home school while at DLC, does not include individuals who graduated after they left DLC.
GED	Passed GED while at DLC, does not include individuals who might have passed GED after leaving DLC.

By system-wide standards, the mobility rate of DLC students is very high. That is, the rate of movement in and out of the Center is high. As shown in Table 2, 89 of the 291 former students at DLC returned to their home schools. Follow-up data are not available to determine what action was taken by those who returned to home schools after their return. Some may have dropped out. Some went on to graduate. However, it is known that 65 of the 232 probable dropouts graduated from DLC or passed the GED (high school equivalency exam) or went on to some other productive activity and did not drop out of school.

The unique character of the Downtown Learning Center, appealing to probable dropouts, would imply that the mobility rate would be high. It is to the credit of the Center that the probable course of action of so many potential dropouts was reversed. In addition to the benefit the individual derives from furthering his education, the system gains financially by receiving more state funds for support of the total system-wide program.

Table 3 shows the mobility information broken down by schools. Inspection of this table, indicating the juvenile court referrals, reveals the potential for redirecting pupils with deviant behavior patterns who might benefit from the less highly structured atmosphere of DLC and the emphasis there on the individual's problems, interest, and abilities. Of course, DLC could not be expected to benefit all juveniles with deviant behavior patterns; and there is not precise data to show what outcomes there were with those who attended and are no longer enrolled at DLC. It can be inferred from the data, however, that all of the juvenile court referrals did not drop out of school, but some were among those who graduated or went on to some other acceptable activity.

Physical Facilities

The physical facilities of DLC are far from ideal. There was no "start-up" fund, and the old building is difficult to modify into the flexible, varied spaces needed by the unique program. However, students and faculty have worked together, with no budgeted allocation and little assistance from the routine channels of operation, to adapt the facility to make it serve their needs.

From the conception of the idea of the Downtown Learning Center, a major concern has been the physical environment of the school. Because most of the students who have chosen to come to the DLC have been "turned off" by some facet of their previous schooling experience, an attempt has been made to create a noninstitutional, relaxed, informal atmosphere comfortable to work in and efficacious to learning.

During the two years the DLC has been housed on Walker Street, numerous spatial arrangements and decorative ideas have been considered. The style of environment that has evolved is a relaxed, nonconventional, ever changing one.

Most staff members have settled in certain areas of the building, each decorating his own area, often with the help of students. Through the work of staff and students some rooms have been repainted; the auditorium has been completely renovated including the conversion of the balcony into office areas; and the old library is presently being redecorated. Numerous worse-for-wear green armchairs, several couches, and spattering of carpet are scattered throughout the school. Shelved books line parts of the upstairs hallway.

A brightly colored banner, proclaiming the DLC, hangs over the front doors of the school. Several colorful murals grace the walls of the lower floor; and vividly colorful, larger-than-life photographs of food hail the entrance to the cafeteria which faces a student decorated lounge area known as the Crib.

A computer terminal is in the math lab. Future plans call for: the completion of the student mailboxes; a kitchenette to be installed in the home economics room; and, when funds are made available, curtains, which would allow blackouts for plays and films, to be hung in the auditorium.

The physical environment of the DLC is constantly undergoing changes that are aimed at creating a comfortable learning environment. The atmosphere that has evolved affords the freedom of movement and area flexibility that the DLC requires.

TABLE 3

MOBILITY DATA BY SCHOOL FOR 219 FORMER STUDENTS

	Probable Dropouts	*Juvenile Court Referrals	Not Probable Dropouts	Dropped Out	Returned to Home School	Graduated	Passed GED	Other
Archer	6	(3)	0	4	2	0	0	0
Bass	11	(3)	0	3	1	2	0	Nursing School, O.I.C. Army, Navy, Job Corp
Brown	10	(7)	6	4	3	2	0	Withdrew to work full time
Carver	8	(0)	1	2	4	1	0	2 never came after admission
Dykes	13	(0)	9	2	5	10	2	Trade School, Atlanta Area Tech, withdrew to marry/work
Douglass	3	(0)	0	0	2	0	0	Job Corps
East Atlanta	18	(6)	0	4	5	1	0	O.I.C., Navy, hospital, Youth Dev. Center
Fulton	5	(2)	0	1	3	0	0	Youth Develop.
George	3	(1)	1	0	1	0	0	2 moved, 1 never came after admission
Grady	15	(0)	9	4	5	0	2	3 moved, 1 Trade School
Harper	3	(1)	0	0	1	0	1	1 went to training 1 never came after admission
Howard	4	(0)	0	0	0	0	1	2 never came after admission
Murphy	5	(1)	0	2	3	0	0	0
North Fulton	14	(0)	8	3	4	7	1	Coast Guard, USAF, hospital moved, boarding school, jail, deceased
Northside	18	(0)	12	4	5	0	0	0
O'Keefe	6	(1)	0	1	1	2	1	Night school
Parks Junior	1	(0)	0	0	0	1	0	0

TABLE 3 (Continued)

	Probable Dropouts	*Juvenile Court Referrals	Not Probable Dropouts	Dropped Out	Returned to Home School	Graduated	Passed GED	Other
Price	6	(0)	3	3	0	4	0	2 to Atlanta Area Tech
Roosevelt	13	(6)	0	5	4	0	0	1 never came after admission 2 Youth Dev. Center, Kirkwood Center
Smith	3	(2)	0	3	0	0	0	0
Southwest	4	(0)	6	0	7	1	1	1 summer school only
Sylvan	13	(8)	0	7	4	0	0	Trade School, Job Corps
Therrell	17	(2)	6	4	4	3	3	1 never came after admission Trade School USAF, 3 moved illness, Atlanta Tech
Turner	5	(1)	0	2	2	0	0	Never came after admission
Washington	18	(5)	0	5	9	0	0	4 never came after admission
West Fulton	11	(2)	0	1	1	3	0	2 Trade School 1 Strect Academy moved, 2 never came after admission
Totals	229	52	62	65	77	55	12	

* The numbers in this column are included in either the first or third columns and should not be added in the total number of students from each school.

Chief among the shortcomings of the physical facilities are: no laboratory space or furnishings and inadequate wiring for a variety of equipment. A group from DLC won a state-wide drama award and one student was in the Covernor's Honors Program in drama, in spite of the lack of theatre facilities to use for learning experiences. Stage lighting was given to the school, but it could not be used because of inadequate wiring.

Instructional Pattern

Upon being admitted to DLC, each student is assigned an adviser by the Review Board. The adviser serves as counselor, guide, and friend. Each faculty member serves as an adviser to a group of students. The relationship between student and adviser is expected to be one of mutual trust. The student and adviser decide on the terms of the relationship at the beginning of each quarter and changes are made on request. Advisers also may share their concerns with parents, social agencies, etc.

An agreement is signed by each student and his adviser which defines general responsibilities of each member of the DLC community during the student's stay at DLC. This is a nonnegotiable agreement, violation of which results in discussion with the Review Board and possible termination of relationships with DLC. (See Appendix for General Agreement.)

A negotiable agreement is the plan, reviewed each quarter, by which the student sets out educational goals and schedule, along with criteria for judging progress toward goals. Cooperation is reinforced, thus facilitating a student's control of one's own life and spelling out the terms to which the student may commit himself/herself with confidence.

Another negotiable agreement is the subject contract for individualized courses of study. Together, the students and teachers design objectives, criteria for evaluation, and the designated responsibilities and commitment of each. An actual written contract is the basis for the relationship allowing a student a measure of choice in what he learns and how to go about it. Contracts may be fulfilled by activities involving other students in group interactions in the school building or by activities associated with the student's employment, or through volunteer activities in the community. (See Appendix for sample contracts.)

The group activities are seen by the DLC community as opportunities to foster wholesome development of relationships among young people and adults; to foster rewarding peer relationships as well as wholesome adult role models. Some of the group activities are:

1. Sunshine -- a simulation game to understand the racial tensions in the city through role playing. This brought to the school many people from many parts of the city, who entered into a dialogue that related closely with concerns of students. Staff participated as role players along with students. This game encouraged students and staff to communicate in a nonthreatening way some concerns about race relations that had not been focused upon by other structures. It has been an attempt to open communication to a sensitive area often hidden, but profoundly determining the success or failure of personal relationships at the center, the confidence or helplessness of students and staff to control their own lives. This game reinforces the desire to confront and to facilitate interracial communication and understanding. This need was not being adequately met by the structures instituted at the beginning of the program.

2. Frequent camping trips -- to foster fuller interpersonal communication in a less schoolish environment. These are characterized by major planning by students and by voluntary staff leadership after school hours.

3. Sports Club -- a lab organized around the interest of many students in sports. This club fosters the establishment of satisfying relationships around a common interest in sports, but does not stop there. The goals of these students to succeed at school are reinforced and facilitated by relating math, reading, and social studies to sports. Contracts generated out of this natural interest area were not evolving through the structures of adviser-advisee relationships and subject contracts.

4. Wonderful Wednesday -- mornings set aside by student or staff group to plan varied group activities which would involve all DLC participants. These planning sessions and Wednesday activities fostered much communication between students and staff.

5. Wall designs by students -- students taking an active part in making the center a bright, colorful environment. This had been an expression of students taking responsibility for the way the school looks, and fosters a pride and personal identification with the surroundings, investing it with a reflection of their sense of self-worth and dignity.

6. The crib -- a student controlled smoking lounge which they decorated by themselves.

7. Several sensitivity groups initiated by students, and bringing in trained leaders from Georgia State University and West

Georgia College. This is an example of students taking responsibility for their education, and it strengthens the tendency for students to do so by showing that it can be successfully done. It is a genuine student response to the need for more satisfying relationships, and the need to take more control of their lives by initiating this program.

8. Philosophy Seminar -- a series of weekly meetings for over a year in which staff has attempted to clarify the direction of the center, and the long range significance of such a program. Students have been encouraged to participate. This seminar has helped to analyze the nature of personal relationships in order to set about making them more satisfying for both students and staff. It has been an open forum for defining major problems and searching out ways to better direct the future.

9. Breakfast on Wednesday -- from 7:30 to 9:00 students and staff may purchase eggs, grits, toast, bacon, coffee, pancakes, a la carte (10¢ an item) cooked to order. Every morning coffee, tea, and hot chocolate are available in the home economics room. It is a good time and a good way for folks to get to know each other.

10. Camp Learning Project (Atlanta Public Schools) -- DLC students participated as precamp classroom aides and camp counselors in each session held. In all, 26 DLC students and one staff-member coordinator participated directly, with most other DLC staff members involved in some way with resource assistance.

11. Video tape group -- ten students under the direction of Clarence Wright (of Morehouse College and the Black Appalachia Commission) have learned the techniques of working with video by traveling to a youth conference in West Virginia to tape a documentary, editing their work in a TV station in Johnson City, Tennessee, and knowing that their completed documentary is being shown on cable TV in Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. They are currently working on a documentary for a day care center in Bremen, Georgia, negotiating with the Neighborhood Youth Corps to do a program on young musicians and plan a documentary on DLC. The group includes both black and white students of every academic interest and skill level.

12. InterNation Simulation -- DLC planned and hosted this political-economic-social simulation; student participants came from 21 Atlanta high schools; DLC students helped

plan and coordinate the game, as well as acting as monitors and messengers on all four floors.

13. Children's Play Structure -- built by DLC students at an Atlanta playground under direction of J. Beckwith from San Francisco and supervised by Wendy Shulman, volunteer teacher in art.

In addition to those group activities, students may attend in varying size groups, instruction in karate, American history, wood shop (taught by the counselor), and literature.

Reading

The staff of DLC sees the need for a strong reading program for providing students with an important tool for learning. The basic goal of the reading program is to "turn students on" to reading.

The DLC reading program is an eclectic approach, using the successful methods materials and machines employed in various other reading programs. In addition, the staff has experimented with ways to provide individual reading instruction. Thus, the DLC reading program has developed into a laboratory, wherein students work individually on a contractual basis to complete a developmental program of instruction.

All DLC students were given California Reading Language Tests to determine their weaknesses and strengths in reading skills. Students scoring below grade level on the reading portion of the California tests are given the Spache Reading Inventory. On the basis of these diagnostic tests, students are counselled regarding their reading performance, and when they score below their grade level, they are advised to take reading contracts.

At DLC three types of contracts are available to reading students dependent upon their proficiency in the reading skills. Students reading on or below grade level are most often advised to take developmental reading contracts. Students reading above grade level are generally advised to take speed reading and/or free reading contracts.

Since the staff subscribes to an eclectic approach to reading instruction, reading activities are many and varied. Approximately 100+ students have done speed reading contracts, and 250+ students have completed free reading contracts.

Within the next school year the following improvements are expected to be made in the reading program:

1. A sufficient number of volunteers, preferably college students, will be available for tutoring reading students.

2. Additional activity options will be coordinated with reading instruction.

3. The reading lab will be made more physically attractive.

4. Some system will be developed to get more students to complete developmental reading contracts.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 give the results of the tests given in the reading program.

TABLE 4

MEAN SCORES OF STUDENTS TAKING CALIFORNIA READING TEST

	1971	1972	1973	1974
Pretest	N=29	N=33	N=36	N=33
	9.8	8.9	9.0	9.2
Posttest		N=15		N=24
		10.1		9.9
Gain		1.2		.7

TABLE 5

EXTREME MEAN SCORES OF CALIFORNIA READING TEST PRETEST

	1971	1972	1973	1974
Above 12.0	N=7	N=6	N=5	N=8
	12.9	13.7	13.2	13.0
Below 6.0	N=8	N=14	N=8	N=2
	1.7	3.5	3.7	4.1

TABLE 6

MAIN GAIN IN READING OF STUDENTS AT DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER IN EIGHT MONTHS (1973-74)

	Mean Gain (Years)
In Reading Program N=24	1.6
Not in Reading Program N=37	.5

Table 4 indicates a mean gain of 1.2 for the 15 who took the pretest and posttest in 1972. In 1974, a gain of only .7 was recorded for those who took both tests. This may be attributable to the fact of the large number (14) of extremely low scores in 1972, whereas the 1974 group had only two at the extreme low point (see Table 5). Table 6 gives the really significant information about the effectiveness of the program. A difference of more than a year (1.6) of progress in reading skill is noted among those who took the reading program as compared with those who did not.

Personalized Instruction

The personalized program of instruction has several significant points made by members of the DLC community:

Every student has a program of study that is unlike anyone else's.

All 867 courses are offered all the time.

Each student is encouraged to take as much responsibility for his/her own education as he/she can manage.

Students know where they are in courses and why they are doing what they are doing.

Instructors have a strong input into contracts: suggesting sources, designing evaluation, urging quality, and creating alternatives.

Every contract is based on the student's ability, achievement level, interests, and goals.

Instruction is in many forms: one-to-one, small groups, seminars, large groups; daily, biweekly, weekly, occasionally, monthly; self-teaching, teacher-directed, peer-tutoring, and community source-person oriented.

Evaluation is in many forms: objectively scored tests, a finished painting, an essay, or an oral demonstration.

Students complete, on an average, as many courses as they usually complete per quarter in their home schools.

Some students have indulged in writing "rip-off" contracts, i.e., a contract that is so easy as to be meaningless except for the credit. When teachers detect this they simply refuse to negotiate that kind of contract with that student, and alert other staff members to do the same. It works.

Staff members are developing and testing diagnostic tests in most subject areas as a way to counsel students better during contract negotiations.

Most students renegotiate their contracts at least once. These renegotiations nearly always indicate that the student is getting in touch with needs, interests, goals, and abilities.

As in any other school situation, students gravitate toward teachers who are resourceful, dynamic, approachable, knowledgeable. At the DLC, however, students learn to come to terms with instructors they do not necessarily like, even though no student, or instructor, is coerced to work with anyone.

The staff has commented that they have learned that contracting calls for some skills and perceptions that are not necessarily a part of everyone -- students or teachers. Most teachers seem to become more skilled every quarter, assisted by a free interchange of ideas with their colleagues. Students who are less curious, able, and perceptive are helped to attain the skills and perceptions by supportive attitudes and by the use of highly structured, "canned" contracts that give a student the needed measure of structure while encouraging him to alter the contract when he wishes.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents/guardians are involved at the student's point of entry into the program. The student and his parents/guardians are a part of the application and interview process. The general agreement the student signs with the DLC is also signed by the parent/guardian who affirms: "I have read this agreement and I support my son's/daughter's commitment to it." In this agreement, the DLC adviser is committed to send a copy of the quarterly agreement to the parents at the beginning of each quarter in addition to the report of completed contracts. The agreement gives the adviser the responsibility of further contact as often as necessary and encourages the parents to make contact as often as they feel they would like to.

Soon after the program was initiated, a need was felt for more parental input with the vehicle being a parent's meeting. The response from parents was very good, but the idea was not pursued until 1974 when a Parent Support Group began.

A parent survey was conducted to solicit input for a program evaluation in the spring of 1972. Along with a general expression of support for the program, the parents did comment about their involvement (or lack thereof). Some parents asked for more parent meetings, but the meetings did not follow. Most parents expressed a need for more information about the student's progress. In response, regular quarterly progress reports to parents became a part of the program.

A survey of DLC advisers conducted in May, 1974, showed that advisers contact their advisees' parents/guardians at least once a quarter and often more frequently. In addition to contacting parents regularly with progress reports, student's needs, personal problems, and attendance, parents are also contacted by the advisers about special DLC events to which they are invited and for occasional solicited donations (time, materials, furnishing).

The same survey indicated that parents in general contact their son's/daughter's adviser less frequently than they are contacted. Some parents do not contact the adviser at all, but a few contact the adviser frequently. Most of the reported contacts by parents were related to their son's/daughter's progress. Parents also contacted the adviser about student personal problems such as court involvement and parent-student conflicts.

Parents tend not to get involved in the DLC beyond the level of concern specifically related to their son/daughter. Parents have come by invitation to an open house, a parent's meeting, drama

presentations, fashion shows, and other special events. A few parents have also made commitment to donate time (i.e., drama, special performances, video) and material goods (i.e., carpeting, props for drama, books). A few have provided information about resources of interest. Some parents also have become involved as a participant in their son's/daughter's contract.

The DLC community feels that a high degree of parent involvement would be desirable but that it has not materialized as a result of parent initiative nor as a result of the invitations of the staff and students. A lightly structured organization with regular meetings could provide a means of communication between parents and school, and, also, could be of significant assistance in the implementation of the school program. Some activities suggested by DLC staff of such an organization are:

1. Providing transportation for field trips
2. Fund raising
3. Needs assessment
4. Securing volunteers
5. Securing community cooperation in school events
6. Assistance in program evaluation.

The program administrator has moved toward more intensive effort at development of a parent organization.

MANAGEMENT

The structure of DLC provides the greatest possible flexibility for staff and student planning and communication. Since each day is not rigidly scheduled overall for pupils and teachers, the majority of the hours may be used as needs arise.

Regularly scheduled, however, are Tuesday afternoon faculty meetings as well as Thursday lunch together. Each day's lunch time may be a planning time since all may eat together at the lunch hour from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. At the regularly planned staff meeting sessions, students are encouraged to participate in the discussions or simply to be observers.

Team teaching is done in several areas: a literature course, Black Studies, recreation, and an Interdisciplinary Seminar. Planning time is available for such teams through the flexible scheduling, and this fact seems to encourage the development of team effort.

Morale of students and faculty seems exceptionally high in comparison with other units of the school system. It is probable that the greatest contributing factor is the involvement of all concerned in the decision making and sharing of responsibilities. Only one teacher has initiated a move from DLC. When students feel alienated or offended, they have immediate access to an adviser, and in a short time to the Review Board.

The close association among adults and young people along with individualized instructional programs reducing pupil frustration would appear to be factors which materially contribute to tranquil pupil behavior. In addition, all pupils are there of their own choice and because the Review Board agreed that the place would be beneficial to them. "Wonderful Wednesdays" are reserved for varied activities planned to create and promote a feeling of community. Each advisor is urged to hold meetings on this day with his advisee group of approximately fifteen.

The instructional plan of the school includes all of the 867 courses in the Atlanta High School Curriculum catalog of courses. Students must meet standard requirements for the diploma, or may take high school equivalency examinations. Objectives are written in the form of contracts, and contracts are written specifically for each student for each subject. Upon completion of the course work contract, the home school of the student is notified of hours of credit earned and grade assigned. No failing grades are assigned because no grade or credit is given until a contract is completed satisfactorily. Examples of topics for contracts and of occupational and social goals around which contracts are planned are included in the Appendix of this report.

COST ANALYSIS

In spite of the completely individualized and personalized program of the Downtown Learning Center, the cost of operation can be less per pupil than the city-wide average of all high schools. Part of the reason for economical operation of the DLC lies in the fact that all students are not housed in the one building all the hours of the school day. They work, utilize community resources for learning activities, study at home, and otherwise are independent learners. Teachers are versatile, serving in a variety of capacities during the school day. For example, the counselor operates the woodshop. Such procedures allow for a comprehensive program without requiring a large staff of specialists. At DLC there are no coaches, band director, choral directors, and other specialists necessary to the program of a large, comprehensive, high school. If such large-group activities

are important to DLC students, they are free to return to the home school for participation. Their schedules are flexible enough to allow it.

Table 7 itemizes and categorizes the expenditures of DLC for the 1973-74 school year and gives projected cost/pupil at higher enrollments.

TABLE 7

DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER COST ANALYSIS
1973-74

Expenditures	Salaried	Nonsalaried
Total	$191,726.50	$36,641.39
Fourth Quarter	22,423.98	-0-
Custodial (maids and custodians)	15,668.33	831.42
Curr. and Sup. (textbooks)	-0-	2,526.39
Learning Resources (librarian)	11,482.91	2,697.47
Guidance (counselor)	15,318.35	-0-
Home Economics	-0-	1,339.10
Industrial Arts	-0-	252.70
Art	-0-	1,046.58
Athletics Total	-0-	120.34
Social Science	-0-	145.75
Science	86.20	305.35
Math	-0-	671.79
Classroom Instruction	115,733.99	10,731.74
Administration (steno and supplies)	7,402.00	607.10
School Detectives	-0-	5.96
Maintenance	3,610.74	1,245.06
Utilities	-0-	14,114.64
Indirect Costs	327.44	
Grand Total Expenditures	228,695.33	
High School City-Wide Cost/Pupil	1,562.07	
Downtown Learning Center Cost/Pupil	1,869.95	

Projected Costs for '74-'75
Enrollment 170 ADA 135 Cost/pupil $1,694.04
Enrollment 190 ADA 152 Cost/pupil $1,504.57

PARENT/STUDENT EVALUATIONS

At a parents' meeting the question was asked, "What is the chief purpose of Downtown Learning Center?" The responses varied slightly, but the sum of comments indicates that the school is expected to provide an alternative for young people who are "turned off" to school. That term was used almost universally.

Both parents and students were asked for symptoms of being "turned off." Their responses included:

Poor performance record in spite of evidence of ability (underachievers)
Frequent absences
Many excuses to leave class
Psychosomatic illnesses
Frequent tardiness
Irritation with routine procedures
Frequent drowsiness in class
Rebellious feelings or activities
"Goofing off," restlessness
Irritation with the same assignment for all in a class
Intense interests in subjects which were not included in school offerings such as film making, dance, performing arts, volunteer community service
Expression of desire for "practical learning activities"
Expression of desire for independence in learning activities
Expression of desire to "work at my own pace without comparison to others"

Parents and students were interviewed to obtain their reactions to Downtown Learning Center. Since attendance at DLC is voluntary, it was assumed that all who are there had positive attitudes toward the place, so the interviews concentrated on identifying specific values perceived by parents and students. Responses included:

By writing a contract, I learned to make choices and follow through on them. I learned to use a wide variety of ways of learning.

Learning became a pleasurable occupation. This was the first time I have developed close personal relations with both young people and older persons in school. I went on a trip to Europe, kept a log, took pictures, and learned the metric system and got course credit for it in English and math.

I like the independence I could have in completing my contracts.

I have really learned in a large variety of ways: in a courtroom, making a film, using video tape, surveying public transportation, a math project in quilting.

I learned more about myself -- my interests and aptitudes.

I remember more of what I learned by completing a contract. I used to forget everything after taking a test.

I have visited other education system alternatives like Parkway in Philadelphia.

You learn your own strengths and weaknesses in dealing with your own age and older people.

The whole city is your classroom.

It took one quarter of "goofing off" and then I found the only person I was fooling was me.

My work experience was made into a learning experience through my contracts.

I was a rebel. At DLC I could only rebel against myself.

My first year I completed only five contracts. Then I learned that I was the only one who would make me do it, and the second year I completed 32. I learned a whole new attitude.

I never had taken an art course before. I got interested here, and now I have a scholarship to art school. I did not know I could do any good.

My child was an outspoken, free thinker, and this caused trouble. The DLC helped him see how "Three R's" can be interesting.

We have seen how there are flexible ways to earn credit for graduation.

Math credit was given for learning accounting and bookkeeping on a job.

He needed activities to learn, not just passive bookwork.

Students here learn self-discipline, self-evaluation, reality.

At DLC the student takes the initiative for planning learning activities, learns how to learn.

The slower student with motivation can work at his own pace without being always compared unfavorably with others.

Here one can study in-depth many job opportunities related to school work.

Here there are fewer interruptions. Everyone who is here wants to be here.

The General Agreement is followed. They do what they say they will do.

INTEREST OUTSIDE ATLANTA SCHOOLS IN DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER

So great has been the interest of persons around the country in the alternative school developed in Atlanta, that letters of inquiry have come, as have requests to teach in the Center. An article in the May, 1974 issue of McCalls Magazine, written by Eleanor Clift, described the program developed by Lamar Hamric and Hilton Smith.

Letters of inquiry have come from:

Dayton Public Schools
McMillan Adult Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
Richland County School District, South Carolina
Greeneville City Schools, Greeneville, Tennessee
Fruitport Community Schools, Fruitport, Michigan
3T Learning Center, Odessa, Texas
Individual in St. Albans, West Virginia
Office of the Mayor, Los Angeles, California
Green Bay Public Schools, Green Bay, Wisconsin
Fox Lane High Schools, Bedford, New Hampshire
Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee

Letters from Parents, Interested Teachers:

Seoul, Korea
Syracuse, New York
Kingston, New York

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first conclusion that can be made from a study of Downtown Learning Center is that it is surely a group of adults committed to effective, personalized education for young people, and a group of young people who respond with enthusiasm and devotion. Graduates return regularly. One, home from Antioch College, heard of the evaluation taking place and went to considerable inconvenience to be sure that his strong support of DLC was heard. Another made a special trip on two occasions to the Central Administration Building to add his comments when he heard about the evaluation. Others stop in regularly to visit.

Everything about the DLC suggests that it is a very fine opportunity to experience transition from adolescence to maturity for those who do not wish to follow the standard route. It could not be considered a panacea for high schools' ills of every sort, but it does make some significant contributions. Among the unique elements:

1. A real opportunity to learn decision making, self-direction. Even those who return to their home school have been given a choice and have learned the consequences of making that choice -- a valuable lesson on the road to maturity.

2. The experience of designing one's own learning activities, planning time utilization, and evaluation of process and product.

3. Close association with young people and adults of the widest variety of ethnic, socioeconomic, and intellectual depth characteristics to be found in the city.

4. Opportunity to utilize the whole community as a classroom including an infinite variety of learning experiences in the "real world." (See Appendix for list of community resources used.)

To say that Downtown Learning Center is significant, important, and effective in many ways, and very valuable as a part of a large city's eductional program, is not to say that it has reached the apex of its potential. Some recommendations seem to be appropriate:

1. Follow-up studies of students who are admitted to DLC and do not continue there would possibly answer questions about characteristics of students best served by such an alternative schooling program, and give evidence of other types needed.

2. Some type of standardized tests (possibly criterion-referenced tied directly to the objectives in contracts) of basic knowledge given in the low-stress atmosphere of DLC would give students, teachers, and parents a record of the young person's intellectual development and serve to direct the student into areas of study he/she might wish to explore.

3. Better physical facilities should be provided by the school system for the Center. DLC participants have done a great deal with their own ingenuity, paint, and cast-off furniture, but comparing the facility with others in the system suggests that it is not high on any list of priorities outside of the Center.

4. Utilize some aspects of the DLC program in regular schools. The DLC staff have made these suggestions:

   a. Flexible hours for students who have demonstrated potential to handle them, or for students whose individual circumstances could best be met by flexible hours.

   b. Independent study for students whose circumstances and needs might be met best by a supervised program of individual study.

   c. Quarter hours credit for outside activities where course objectives are met and where supervision is assured.

   d. Quarter hours credit for a course when the student demonstrates achievement of the objectives at the upper level of the objectives.

   e. Flexible division of credit into small units, from one to ten quarter hours per course, based on completion of natural divisions of each course.

   f. Interest as basis for individual schedule. Make the curriculum guide available to everyone involved with counselling and scheduling. Encourage students to match courses with interests. (Broaden course offerings each quarter, too.) Use college style scheduling.

   g. Labs replace classrooms in schools where the staff wants to develop in that direction. (DLC staff could act as resource personnel.)

   h. Contract teaching by teachers in schools where the staff determines that it would like to explore it. DLC staff could encourage, introduce, and coordinate. This would include pass/superior grading option.

5. Other suggestions made by the DLC staff seem valuable to the development of more effective programs for a diverse student population.

   a. Interested teachers in high schools would intern for one quarter at the DLC.

   b. The DLC would conduct inservice programs for interested teachers in such areas as contract teaching, action learning, human relations, simulations, learning laboratories, creating options, "no failure" marking systems, and student involvement.

   c. The DLC would field test for the school system new and promising innovative media and materials in the area of individualized instruction.

   d. The DLC would help school personnel develop alternative programs for individual pupils.

   e. The DLC would help school personnel develop school-within-a-school alternatives.

   f. The DLC would assist in establishing other learning resources.

   g. The DLC would assist schools in locating community resources.

   h. The DLC would provide input to school system committees working on current school problems.

6. The administration of the school system should make a conscientious, well-planned effort to:

   a. Support the existing efforts of DLC.

   b. Provide equity in housing facilities and equipment.

   c. Conduct an annual evaluation in order to identify promising practices which can be spun-off to other school settings as well as to eliminate emerging weaknesses in the program.

   d. Incorporate appropriate features in "regular schools."

A new project or program will necessarily incur high expenses in its beginning period. This seems to be the case with DLC. Now, having built the enrollment to a manageable size in relation to procedures and personnel, it appears that an effective operation exists within budgetary limits. Recent consultation with the staff reveals that they feel confident that the expenses shown in the cost analysis could effectively support an enrollment up to 200, which is expected by the end of 1974-75.

SUMMARY

Examination of the School System Objectives for 1973-74 and evaluating Downtown Learning Center in relation to these objectives leaves little doubt about its efficacy. Surely the General Goal is achieved:

> To provide learners with opportunities to attain high levels of achievement and to develop positive attitudes toward the process of learning, toward themselves, and others.

Achievement of Objective "A" is shown in the student records of improved performance. Objective "B" concerning learner involvement is a signal accomplishment. The system of contract-writing attests to that. Objective "C" is less applicable, since other elements of the system are responsible for an inventory of material and human resources. DLC's contribution to accomplishing Objective "D" concerning community involvement can be seen in many contacts made with the community through parents in all high schools, through community resources for learning, and through community interest generated and evidenced by inquiries directed to the Center.

As a part of their own evaluation, the DLC staff developed four goals for which they will become accountable.

1. We will develop a program of personalized instruction for every student.

   a. We will help each student develop a program for himself that will be unique and will fit his needs. (We will help the student determine what is appropriate for him through involvement, counseling, testing, and follow up.)

   b. We will continue to maintain a student population small enough so that students will have adequate access to the staff.

   c. As a group and as individuals we will structure our time and space arrangement so that people and materials are available, appropriate, and relevant to the students.

   d. We will continue to maintain and promote a humane and mutually respectful attitude toward <u>all</u> individuals.

2. For every student enrolling in DLC, we will assume responsibility to:

   a. Assist the student in identifying and attaining goals, *or*

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b. Place the student better to attain his/her goals, or

c. Determine why we are unable to do "a" or "b."

3. We will obtain more involvement of parents, city, and school system.

   a. We will educate people about the program -- parents' folders, open house, invitations to special programs.

   b. We will develop ways to export ideas to schools -- e.g., workshops, have contracts evaluated by school instructors.

   c. We will use the city resources more.

   d. We will include parents and school system folks in the evaluation process.

   e. We will continue to encourage volunteers to work at DLC.

4. We will develop and apply an evaluation/accountability model this school year.

   a. The model will entail the product of our philosophy project.

   b. The model will be appropriate to the DLC objective.

   c. The model will be efficient and easy to administer.

   d. The model will involve students, staff, and parents by including their assessments of their level of satisfaction with the program.

   e. We will apply the model to see how well it works and adjust it as necessary. (Application will include staff transfers where applicable.)

Further, the staff designed a program of procedure for accomplishing the goals, presented as a chart to visually merge existing routines with evaluation proposals. (Chart 1.) The procedure will be followed in the coming year as a means to improved precision in planning and evaluation. The procedure includes input from staff, parents, students, and community extended over the three quarters of the regular school year, and provides for goal statements, as well as objectives and evaluation of progress in achieving objectives.

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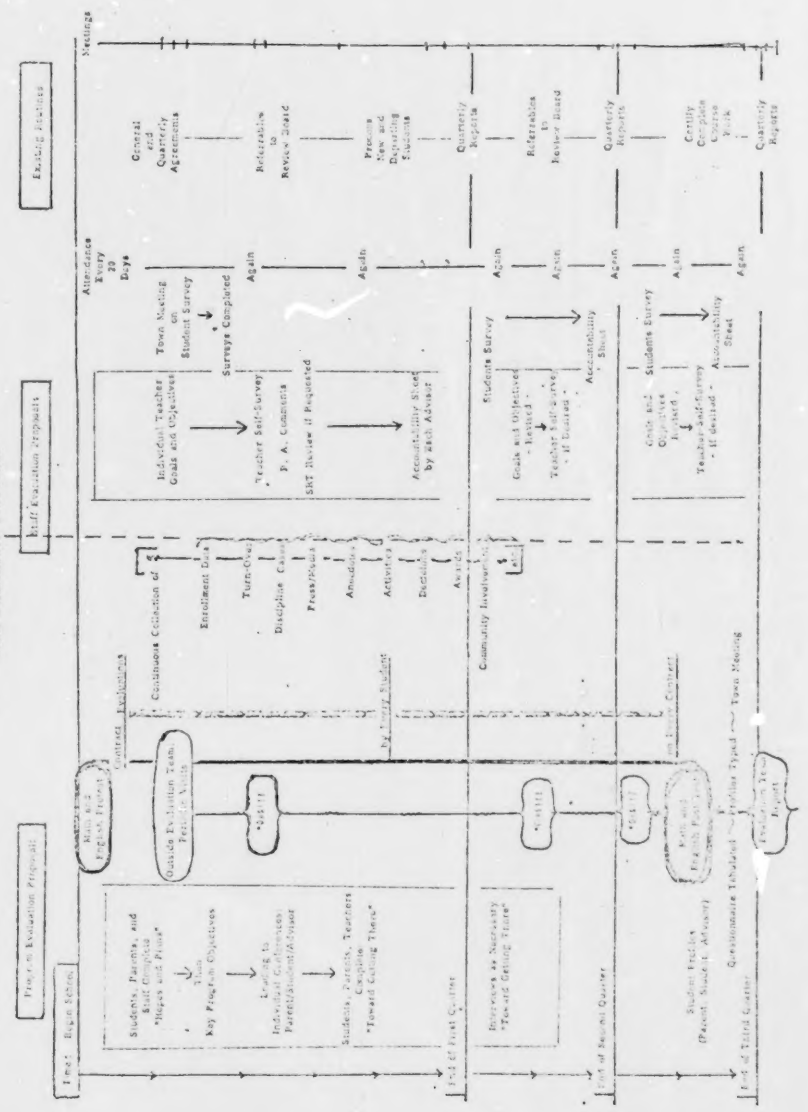
CHART 1
A CHART TO VISUALLY MERGE EXISTING ROUTINES WITH EVALUATION PROPOSALS



APPENDIX

APPLICATION

PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING TO THE
DOWNTOWN LEARNING CENTER

1. Fill out page one of application; have your parent/guardian fill out page two; bring these two pages back or mail them to the DLC as soon as they are completely filled out.

2. Take pages 3 and 4 to your counselor at school where you are now enrolled or were last enrolled; ask counselor to complete these pages and mail them with a copy of your permanent record to the DLC as soon as possible.

3. Your application will be considered and you will be called to come to the DLC for an interview as soon as all 4 pages of this application are returned to the DLC.

4. You will be notified if we are unable to consider your application for any reason.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL US (524-1951)

APPLICATION

To Be Completed By Student

Name _____ School _____

Address _____
Number Street Direction Apt. No. Zip Code

Present grade in school_____ Home Phone_____

What are your needs that you would like to see met at the DLC and the changes that you would like to make in yourself?_____
_____
_____
_____

What are your hobbies and interests?_____
_____
_____

Have you ever had a job? _____ Where?_____

Would you like to get a part-time job?____ Doing What?_____
Why?_____
_____
_____

How did you first find out about the Learning Center?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Apply for:

Fall____, Winter____, Spring____, Summer____, or
First Opening____

To Be Completed By Parents/Guardians

Student's Name_____

Father's Name_____ Home Phone_____

Address_____
Number Street Direction City Zip Code

Occupation_____ Business Phone _____

Student lives with (check)

Mother and Father_____ Other____ (Identify)_____

Mother_____ Father_____

Guardian's Name (If not living with parents)_____

Address_____
Number Street Direction City Zip Code

Occupation_____ Home Phone_____ Business_____

Parent/Guardian -- If you do not have a home phone, please list a neighbor's name and number at which you can be reached.
_____

Student's age_____ Birthdate_____

Health: Excellent_____ Good_____ Fair_____ Poor_____

Please list any health problems or disabilities: _____
_____

Why would you like for your child to attend the DLC? _____

_____

_____

What changes would you like to see (him, her) make if acceptance at the Downtown Learning Center is granted? _____

_____

_____

To Be Completed By School

Student's Name _____ School _____

Homeroom _____

Principle reason for school's recommendation to Downtown Learning Center: _____

_____

Absences (this year) -- _____ Last year -- _____

Tardies (this year) -- _____ Last year -- _____

What changes would you like to see take place in this student as a result of (his, her) experiences at Downtown Learning Center? _____

_____

TEST DATA

Latest ability test:

Name of test _____ Date _____

Scores -- Verbal _____ Quant. _____ Total _____

Latest achievement test:

Name of test _____ Date _____

Scores or grade replacement level

Reading _____
Math _____
Science _____
Social Study _____

Social Agency Data

To your knowledge has a social agency worked with this student? ____

If yes, give name of agency _____

Dates: _____

Name and position of contact person within agency: _____

_____

_____

Health Data

Please list any physical disabilities or health problems we should be aware of: _____

_____

_____

Activities

Is there a special activity in which this student will remain involved in at your school if (he, she) is accepted at DLC?

Activity _____ Time of activity _____

==========

Name of person completing questionnaire: _____

Title: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

PLEASE ATTACH AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT TO THIS APPLICATION

IMPORTANT: Carry the student on a homeroom roll as DLC will send you the attendance data at the end of each 20-day attendance period.

1. The DLC community set up the Review Board to do two things:

   a. Process and review all applications and
   b. Review any students referred to it by advisers.

   In making decisions the Review Board is supposed to be guided by (1) what is best for the student and (2) what is best for the DLC.

2. The Review Board is answerable to the DLC Community. The Review Board can exist because the Program Administrator has delegated power and responsibility.

3. The Review Board is a group of seven folks: four students and three staff members. The four students will be a black female, a black male, a white female, and a white male. The three staff members will be racially and sexually representative as far as practicable. The Program Administrator is an ex officio member of the Board.

4. Normal term on the Review Board is one quarter for students, two quarters for staff members. (Staff members' terms are to be staggered to provide carry over from one Board to the next.) Members are supposed to nominate their own replacements, who must be approved by the whole Board before coming on the Board. Departing members are to thoroughly orient their replacements before leaving.

5. When a Board member just quits, or has to leave the Board, the remaining members will select a replacement. If a Board member is just not doing the job, the remaining members, after open discussion with the irresponsible soul, may select a replacement.

6. The Review Board normally meets once a week, and beyond that as necessary to meet its responsibilities. Members anticipating being absent should notify at least one other member in advance.

1. Explain the criteria for application to applicants:

   a. Must be enrolled in an Atlanta middle, junior, or high school, or

   b. If not presently enrolled in an Atlanta school, will be considered contingent on enrollment in an Atlanta middle, junior, or high school. (This means paying tuition if necessary)

2. Make sure that applicants complete the DLC application before being interviewed. A completed application includes:

   a. Student form
   b. Parent or guardian form
   c. Counselor or principal form
   d. Transcript
   e. Supplementary test data (when available)

3. Sets up interviews with applicants. Interviews should be done by one staff member and one student member. Board members should also contact those who have important insight into a case -- parents, counselors, caseworkers, etc.

4. The Board may exercise a deadline for interviews each quarter. The deadline for the first quarter would be about four weeks; for second, third, and fourth quarters the deadlines would be made for individual appli ants who are "hardship cases." Exceptions to deadlines would be determined by the Board as a whole.

5. During interviews verify the accuracy of the information in the folders.

6. Post the names and home schools of applicants on the bulletin board to elicit responses from the DLC community.

7. Put names of former students who are reapplying on agenda of next meeting for discussion.

8. Acceptance or rejection is to be decided on the Board as a whole. Only four applicants are to be considered per meeting unless otherwise agreed. If a Board member is going to miss a meeting, that member should make his/her feelings about the applicants known in advance.

9. Admit applicants on these criteria:

   a. Sincere personal desire to come to DLC.

   b. Awareness of some genuine need, e.g.
      (1) deficiency in basic skills
      (2) desire for less structured environment
      (3) desire for a program that is not feasible at his/her home school

   Refuse students who reject the idea of coming to DLC. Students with severe emotional problems or severe learning disabilities will be refused unless (1) referred directly to DLC by a physician, psychologist, or agency and (2) the Review Board is convinced that the DLC is better equipped to help that student than existing agencies.

10. Immediately inform applicants of acceptance or rejection. Also inform home, school, and parents.

11. Assign accepted student to adviser, after securing adviser's consent.

12. Maintain accurate enrollment data by school and by adviser. Maintain system with school secretary to assure that office and Board have accurate enrollment data. Post enrollment data weekly on chart provided.

REVIEW BOARD -- REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. The Review Board is to review and make recommendations on any case brought to it by any DLC person. The Review Board is supposed to help humanize and individualize the DLC. It is supposed to be an input point for students and an extension of each adviser.

   The Review Board is supposed to assure due process for everyone involved in each case, and specifically to see that students are aware of their rights.

2. Cases to be brought to the Review Board can be generally described as disagreements over, or violations of, the General Agreement or Quarterly Agreements. Usually this will involve student and adviser.

3. a. A case can be brought to the Review Board at anytime, but

   b. Toward the end of each quarter, the Review Board will set a date by which advisers should have notified the Board of the need to review individual advisees. (The adviser is supposed to notify the students involved and their parents)

4. The Review Board will disseminate a list of referred students to the staff so staff members may contribute to any cases they choose, and may suggest to advisers other advisees who should be considered for referral to the Review Board.

5. The Review Board will set times for each individual review. All parties in a review may request other persons to be present to support their respective positions.

6. If a student waives his/her right to a review, or does not show up at the set time, the student will be returned to the home school usually at the beginning of the next quarter. The student and adviser may also work out other alternatives.

7. The Review Board will immediately inform all parties in each review of its recommendations. In addition, decision will be posted on the bulletin board and transmitted to the school secretary.

GENERAL AGREEMENT

The following is an agreement between the Downtown Learning Center and _____. It shall be in effect as long as he/she attends the DLC.

The Student

1. I AGREE TO DO WHAT I SAY I WILL DO: i.e., keep appointments, complete school work, contracts, etc.

2. I agree to respect rights, privacy, and property while at the DLC, which means: I will not interfere with others' right to be left alone, or steal other stuff, etc.

3. (Note: We understand the concept of self-defense.) I agree not to harm physically or threaten physically any one at the DLC. I realize that the DLC community will not tolerate this and that such action usually results in student withdrawal.

4. I understand that I must get permission first, before I go to my home school during school hours. My adviser or the Program Administrator can help me get permission.

5. I understand that I can only smoke in smoking areas.

6. Attendance: I agree to let my advisor know when I am here and when I will not be here. I will show up for testing when I am supposed to.

7. I understand that a community activity usually will be planned for each Wednesday and that the staff will go and wants me to go too. I understand that students, as well as staff, can plan these activities.

8. I agree to set up, each quarter, a plan and agreement between my adviser and me about my attendance and schoolwork.

9. I understand the DLC open campus concept.

10. I understand that the DLC staff does not condone possession or use of illegal drugs on the DLC campus.

The Staff

1. The DLC will contact parents as often as necessary including a report of completed contracts every sixty days. Parents are encouraged to make contact as often as they feel they would like to.

2. The DLC adviser will (1) post the student's attendance daily and accumulatively by quarter, (2) keep a record of completed contracts, (3) advise the student academically and personally, and (4) send a copy of the quarterly agreement to the student's parents at the beginning of each quarter.

3. The DLC agrees to help the student set goals and to allow the student to plan a program to attain those goals.

4. The DLC agrees to respect the rights, privacy, and property of others and will insist that others do the same.

5. The DLC will run interference for the student at his home school.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE DLC I MUST FOLLOW THIS AGREEMENT. VIOLATIONS MAY BE REFERRED BY THE ADVISER TO THE REVIEW BOARD.

_____
Student

WE AGREE TO DO WHAT WE SAY WE WILL DO.

_____
(for the) DLC Staff

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND I SUPPORT MY SON'S/ DAUGHTER'S COMMITMENT TO IT.

_____
Parent/Guardian

_____
Date

Contract Number _____ Date Issued _____

Date Completed _____

NAME _____

CONTRACTING IN: Movie Review and Filmmaking

COURSE CORRELATE: Mass Media #301220

PURPOSE: To study the history and process of filmmaking through research, review, and production

Criterion Performance

A. Read: "A History of the Film" and answer the questions on the Film Study Guide.

B. Write a form letter for information and complimentary materials from each of the following organizations: The American Federation of Film Societies, The American Film Institute, The Educational Film Library Association, Filmboard, Film Study Programs, National Center for Film Study, The National Film Study Project, and St. Clement's Film Association. (Addresses appear in Bibliography, page 36)

C. Review your choice of movies according to the criteria listed on the Film Study Guide. Use "Dialogue With the World Program" and "Cornucopia of Film Programming" as reference material.

D. Read: "How and What Does a Movie Communicate" by John Houseman (pp. 298-310 Literature of America)

Write an essay either supporting or reflecting the main premises of Houseman's essay.

E. Project -- You will plan and execute the making of an original film paying maximum attention to five details.

Note: Use at least one book as a reference for making your film.

In regard to the above, I agree to:

1. Work on this contract between the hours of _____ and _____ on _____.
2. Try to complete this contract by (target date): _____

I understand that this contract may be renegotiated at any time.

Student _____

Instructor _____

Approaches to Contracts

1. Media (T.V., video tape, filmstrips, movies, radio, photogaphy, etc.)

2. Print (Books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)

3. Interaction (Interviews, group-work, games, simulations, volunteer work, tutoring, part-time jobs, etc.)

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Ideas for Contracts

Law
Photography
Printing
Poetry
Journalism
American History
Famous people in history
Psychology
Government
Politics
Drama
Painting and drawing
Wood working
Piano
Guitar
Astronomy
Animals
Plants
Weather
Yoga
Sewing
Cooking
Reading
Math (basic)
Creative writing
Speed reading
Spanish
French
Nursing
Track
T.V. -- movie viewing
Tape recording
Career exploration
Fish (tropical)
Group interaction
Health
Geography
Sociology
Business Math
Business English
Algebra
Geometry
Trigonometry
Clay
Ceramics
Music appreciation
Art history
Cycling
Camping
Auto mechanics
Astrology
Modern dance
Sociology
Teenage problems
Cafeteria aide
Library aide
Office aide
Teacher aide
Anthropology
Black studies
Electronics
Physics
Rocks and Minerals
History of English language
Short stories
Novels
Tutoring
Supervising recreation
Movie making
Gardening

Current events
Coins
Stamps
Economics
Child care
Medicine
Swimming
Tennis
Fishing
Oceonography
Ancient history
Human biology
Secretarial work
Silkscreen printing
Wood carving
Chemistry
Home mechanics
Bowling
Golf
Map reading
Myths and Legends
Recreation
Individual exercise
Great Ideas
Drug education
Sex education
History of mathematics
Cashiering
Health occupations
Social problems
Typing
Computer science

Goal Setting

1. Occupational

2. Personal -- Social

3. Educational

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Occupational Goals (Examples)

Nurse
Social worker
Bricklayer
Artist
Radio-T.V. Serviceman
Teacher
Secretary
Lawyer
Salesman
Journalist
Coach
Vetenarian
Day care center worker
Librarian
Conservationist
Plumber
Auto mechanic
Computer programmer
Dental Assistant
Dentist
Accountant
Cashier
Zookeeper
Construction worker
Real estate salesman
Doctor
Commercial artist
Actor/Actress
Pilot
Policeman
Fireman
Military serviceman
Hostess
Receptionist
Medical assistant
Photographer

Banker
Barber
Model
Airline stewardess
Cook
Seamstress
Recreation worker
Infant Education
Psychologist
Recreation leader
Store manager
Sheet metal worker
Forest ranger
Others

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Musician
Writer
Broadcaster
Carpenter
Painter
Pharmacist
Projectionist
Typist
Legal Secretary
Printer
Locksmith
Reporter

Problem solving
Community involvement
Creative expression
Hobby development
Learning to play a musical instrument
Better race relations and understanding
Others _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Educational Goals (Examples)

Technical school
Grade level (8th, 9th, 10th, etc.)
Apprenticeship
High school
College
On-The-Job Training
Vocational (beauty school, heavy equipment operators school, modeling school, business school, etc.)
Junior college
Others _____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

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Personal-Social Goals (Examples)

Human relation skills
Listening skills
Writing skills
Temper control
Getting ideas across
Reading skills
Better verbal expression
Nonverbal expression
Nonverbal communication

Sources for Visits, Information, Volunteer Work

Libraries
Radio, T.V. stations
Atlanta Newspapers
Community Newspapers
Y.M.C.A and Y.W.C.A.
Boys and Girls Clubs
Hospitals
Courthouse
Colleges, Universities
Elementary schools
Day care centers
Nursing homes
Recreation centers
Grant Park zoo
Police Department
Fire Department
Airport
Vetenarians
Red Cross
Community centers
Museums
Banks
Computer centers
Law Offices
Theatres (movie)
Theatres (acting)

Department stores
Observatories
Weather bureau
Restaurants, cafeterias
Health centers
Atlanta Tech
Printers
Crisis centers
Garages
Art centers
Government offices

By being involved in the real life of his community, the student can view his formal education as being truly relevant in his life.

Community Involvement in Contracts

YMCA -- karate, swimming, basketball, etc.
Literacy Action workshops
Georgia State -- auditing classes
New York -- ballet, art history
Japan -- travel, military law
Academy Theatre -- acting, scenery, lighting
Atlanta University
Emory University
Model Cities
Washington, D. C. -- Close Up
Operation Upstream
Legal Aid Society
Fulton County Airport -- flying lessons
Robinson-Humphery -- Stock Market
Andrew Young Office -- Politics, Political campaigns
City of Atlanta Planning Dept.
Fulton County Manager
Volunteer Atlanta
Atlanta Parks and Recreation Dept.
Crawford Long Hospital
Grady Hospital
Grant Park Zoo
High Museum
Chastain Park
Piedmont Arts Festival
Atlanta College of Art
Civil Defense
Taylor's Auto Service
Grant Park Elementary
Pittman Park
Atlanta Public Library -- Black Film Series
Alliance Theatre
Federal Reserve Bank

This list includes places/organizations with a continuing relationship, or where we had several folks involved. It does not include all the places/organizations where individual students worked on contracts.

CONSULTANTS/WORKSHOPS/CONVENTIONS

National Conference on Alternative Education
Media Specialists Workshop
ASCD presentation, July, 1973
Metro Trio Program (Upward Bound)
Wounded Knee Defense Fund
Annual Symposium on Play
Organization of American States
Post-Planning Session on Contract Teaching
Georgia State Counselling Practicum
Simplicity Fashion Show
Committee for an Open School

Area III Learning Center
Atlanta Street Academy
Cross Keys Drama Group
Oak Ridge Alternative High School
Greenville, S. C., Alternative High School
Columbia, S. C., Alternative High School
Parkway in Philadelphia
Black Parents Convention
Humanities Institute at Vermont
St. Paul Open School
Street Academy, Minneapolis
North Springs High School Contract Teaching
International Reading Associates
Oakhurst, Chicago
Metro, Chicago
Clayton Junior College Reading Workshop
Rand-McNally Math Program
Galloway School and Paideia (in Atlanta)

The DLC was the only school to have students as its representatives at the Atlanta Schools Centennial Banquet.

VISITORS/OBSERVERS

College classes and professors from Georgia State, University of Georgia, Atlanta University, University of Massachusetts

Administrators/Superintendents from Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts

Atlanta Public Schools Staff (Area Offices, Administration, ISC)

Professional Associations and Community Agencies -- American Personnel and Guidance Association, Vocational Rehabilitation (Cobb Co.), Literacy Action, Grady Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Planned Parenthood, Salvation Army, Boys Club, Urban Corps

Other Schools (groups included students as well as individuals) -- Paideia, Galloway, Atlanta Street Academy, OIC, Atlanta Area Tech, Charlotte, N.C., Street Academy, Morgan High School (entertained us with a jug band and compared schools at a rap session).

Foreign Visitors -- from Germany, Sweden, France, Jordan, Nigeria, South Africa, and other countries (whenever several come at once, there has been a DLC group gathering for question-answer sessions)

Parents -- many, on many occasions: 2 open houses, 3 times when plays were presented, others at community meetings

Media -- WAGA-TV, WPLO, WRAP, newspapers in Atlanta and Athens, Georgia, Integrand, McCall's Magazine

Academy Theatre (Tour play and high school plays)
Operation Upstream
Explorer Scouts
Family Service Association plays